Concise Encyclopedia of Biochemistry

Edited by T. Scott and M. Brewer

Walter de Gruyter; Berlin, 1983
ii + 520 pages. DM 59.00, $29.90

This useful reference work should be in every life sciences library. Based on a random count of ten pages, there are well over 4000 individual entries covering a diversity of topics ranging from subcellular components, such as lysosomes and Golgi apparatus, and metabolic pathways to both simple and complex molecular structures (e.g., penicillin, immunoglobulins, glycoproteins), as well as some techniques including chromatography, electrophoresis and density gradient centrifugation. The text is informative and illustrated by many diagrams and structural formulae.

Although the coverage is very extensive a few major gaps were noted, some due no doubt to the very rapid progress in many areas of biochemistry. Thus, there is no entry for cytoskeleton, microfilament or microtubule and whereas determination of the primary structure of proteins is covered sequencing of DNA and RNA appears to have been omitted. As I was browsing through the book I became fascinated by comparing what is included and what is not covered (plasmid, effector and ribosome are in, cosmid, mediator and phycobilisome are not) but the relatively few serious omissions do not detract from the value of the book as a whole. There is certainly a need for this encyclopaedia, which is reasonably priced, attractively produced and has much to offer in the way of information that would otherwise be difficult to find. It is to be hoped that the value of this reference book will be maintained by regular updating either by publication of addenda or new editions.

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